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81 JAN 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT : Records Management - Discussions Between
Mr. Colby, Mr. Coffey and [REDACTED]
at 1445 Hours, 24 January 1972

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REFERENCE: A. Mr. Colby's Memorandum to the DCI
dated 14 January, Same Subject

B. IG's Review of Records Administration
in the Agency dated 5 January 1972

1. At Mr. Colby's request, Mr. Coffey and the undersigned met with him on 24 January to discuss referenced memoranda. The ensuing paragraphs summarize issues covered in this discussion.

2. Mr. Colby opened the meeting by saying that he was not interested in discussing the specific details covered in the IG report, however, he was interested in our general reaction to this report and his memorandum to the Director on the subject. He indicated that the Director has read his memorandum and appeared to be in agreement with Mr. Colby's approach, however, I got the impression from Mr. Colby that the Director did not spend much time considering the implications of what Mr. Colby was saying.

3. Mr. Coffey said that we had carefully reviewed the IG report and with minor reservations thought it was a realistic and fair appraisal comment on the current status and recent history of the Agency's posture in records management activities. Mr. Coffey continued the discussion in line with my memorandum to him on this subject dated 22 January 1972. We did highlight several items, however:

A. Mr. Coffey reviewed our earlier suggestions (from the 1970 concept paper) that history, archives, records management and information processing be lumped together in an office of documentation which should be managed and responsive to the DCI on an Agency-wide basis. Mr. Colby admitted the need for a new way of

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organizing for these programs but indicated that the staffs needed for these programs should be housed within the Support Directorate. Mr. Colby suggested that a senior records board could report to the Executive Director on program status and suggest action needed in specific directorate problems.

B. We all agreed that if the Records Management Board is to report directly to the Executive Director then it would have to be upgraded. Mr. Colby suggested that perhaps the Assistant Deputy Directors might be tasked to look into and monitor the records program without creating a formal board. There was considerable discussion on this point but no decision made as to how it should be handled or what the future membership of the board might be.

C. I observed that regardless of what is done about the Records Management Board in the way of upgrading, the crunch issue is getting our senior managers in all directorates to commit more manpower resources (and demand the attention of senior personnel in the chain of command) to the records program and assign this program higher priorities than it has had in the past. The only way you are going to get this done is by directive from the DCI. Mr. Colby was sympathetic to this statement and indicated that he would like to see the Board zero in on policy questions and action recommendations that could be translated into directives from the DCI.

4. Mr. Colby elaborated somewhat on his ideas on how we could get the office heads involved in records retention plans and identify history/archives records. He said he had been considering the following:

Require each office head to prepare an annual report (a chronicle was the term used) of significant program activities in their components. This report would presumably be "sourced" by reference to basic files and the office head would be required to certify that documentation and the important basic background

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papers have been appropriately identified and scheduled for permanent retention. (In the process thereby eliminate the temporary and irrelevant work papers which now clutter up our file systems) I advised Mr. Colby that this is precisely what we are attempting to do in the procedures which require the office heads to review and certify their records schedules. However, I pointed out the serious shortcomings in our records schedules in that they are rarely kept up to date and rarely get the attention they should be getting from the office heads and their senior staff officers.

25X1A 5. Mr. Coffey [REDACTED] briefly reviewed the staff work that went into the archives program and left our memorandum on this subject with Mr. Colby. Mr. Colby said he had deferred meeting with Dr. Ehrmann on this subject until he had an opportunity to discuss it with us. Mr. Colby therefore welcomed the paper and said he would go through it before his meeting with Dr. Ehrmann. We advised Mr. Colby that Ehrmann had a copy of this study and recommendations and, except for some minor nit-picking, Dr. Ehrmann agrees with our proposal. Mr. Coffey suggested that Mr. Colby handle the archives paper as a separate chunk of the overall records, history and information processing package as this might be considered a discrete piece of the problem and could be used as a test case to move at least a portion of the program into the DCI area and logically associate it on the same level as the Historical Staff.

6. Other items mentioned to Mr. Colby during this meeting:

A. Mr. Coffey said he had the Records Management Board report for June through December 1971 and would be forwarding it to him. Mr. Coffey supported my contention that the Board as it is now constituted should not report directly to Mr. Colby but that Mr. Coffey and [REDACTED] must continue to filter these reports and reports to him only the significant activities. 25X1A

B. I mentioned the problem coming up on NPIC film storage as a result of the [REDACTED] Program and that this is bound to cause the DDI difficulties in living within their allowance [REDACTED] I voiced my concern about NPIC's desire to classify all their original negatives for 25X1A

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permanent retention and discussed this in some detail. Mr. Colby agreed completely with my position that it is unrealistic to consider all of this film of permanent or archival value. Mr. Colby suggested that we use the same approach we did with the CI files and demonstrate that reference activities to these files does not warrant their permanent retention for operational reasons.

C. Mr. Colby commented most favorably on his tour of the microfilm display during the fourth running of our Microfilm Seminar. Unfortunately, I overlooked the opportunity this presented to ask him to mention this at a deputies meeting. I did say that it was favorably received by the senior officers in all directorates with some exceptions, notably in DDI/CRS and I gave him my standard pitch on the CRS aperture card problems.

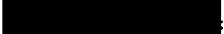
7. The foregoing discussions lasted for over an hour and although no decisions were made it was a beneficial exchange and I think convinced Mr. Colby of the complexities involved in these programs.


Chief, Support Services Staff

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Distribution:

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Orig. - Mr. Coffey via  Mr. Wattles

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